

## Occult Blood Stool Test Cards - Patient Instructions

The occult blood stool test is an important part of your exam. This test checks for blood in your stool. Please follow these instructions carefully. You may have to make some diet and medication changes before you start collecting your samples. If you don't, your test results may not be accurate.

### **Medication Changes**

**Seven days** before you collect your first sample and until after you collect your last sample, ***try to avoid*** taking drugs like aspirin, indomethacin, phenylbutazone, reserpine, corticosteroids, and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (commonly used to treat arthritis). If you take aspirin once a day to prevent heart disease, you may continue to do so.

**Three days** before you collect your first sample and until after you collect your last sample, ***try to avoid*** getting more than 250 mg per day of vitamin C (ascorbic acid) from food or pills or any vitamins that contain vitamin C.

### **Diet Changes**

Some foods might make it look like you have blood in your stool when you don't (false positive result). **Three days** before you collect your first sample, until you collect your last sample:

***do not eat any:***

- red meat (beef, lamb, liver) or processed meats (lunch meat, sausages, hot dogs, ham, bacon)
- raw fruits and vegetables (especially melons, radishes, turnips horseradish, broccoli, and cauliflower)

***you may eat:***

- pork, fish, poultry (chicken, turkey)
- dairy products (cheese, milk)
- cooked or canned fruits and vegetables
- cereal, bread, popcorn, peanuts

### **Getting Ready**

***Do not*** collect samples during your menstrual period. Wait until three days after your period stops.

***Do not*** collect samples while you have bleeding hemorrhoids or blood in your urine.

***Do*** remove toilet bowl cleaners from the toilet tank.

***Do*** collect samples from three bowel movements in a row or closely spaced in time.

***Do*** protect slides from heat, light, humidity, and chemicals.

(over)

## **Collecting Your Stool Samples**

### **Follow these steps:**

1. If your clinic did not attach a name/social security number to each test card, use a pen to write your name and social security number on the front of each test card. When you are not collecting a sample, store the test card in the mailing pouch you received. Keep the cover of the test card closed when not in use.
2. Right before a bowel movement, remove a test card from the pouch and fill in the date the sample was collected.
3. Urinate, flush twice and wait for the bowl to fill.
4. Unfold one of the flushable collection tissues in the kit and let it float on the top of the water. Let the edges stick to the sides of the bowl. Let stools fall onto the tissue. Do not worry if water gets in the tissue.
5. Open the **front** of test card 1. Use one of the sticks provided to collect a small sample from a stool. Spread a **thin** smear of the sample inside box A. Using the same stick, collect another sample from a **different part** of the same stool. Spread a **thin** stool smear inside box B. Throw the stick away. Do not flush the stick. Close the test card sample tab.
6. Repeat the above steps, the next two times you have a bowel movement, using test cards 2 and 3.
7. After you complete the last test card, put all three cards into the **plastic Biohazard bag** and then into the **mailing pouch**.
8. If your clinic gave you a card with your name, social security number, and lab order number, put this in the mailing pouch with the cards. Seal the mailing pouch and attach a US postage stamp.

The lab must receive the test samples within 14 days of collection. When you have completed the three cards, mail them immediately as directed above.

If you have any questions, call your primary care clinic.

If you receive your care at the Minneapolis VAMC, you can choose to bring the test cards to the Specimen Receiving window in the basement of the Medical Center, Room BB-144.

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